



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

MAYOR: David H. Bieter | DIRECTOR: Lynda Lowry

MEMO

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Craig Croner and Jamie Heinzerling, Department of Finance and Administration
CC: Jade Riley, Lynda Lowry, Mike Sherack, Eric Bilimoria, Jennifer Pitino
DATE: 7/19/2019
RE: Animal Licensing Fees, Funding and Ordinance Review

The Boise City Clerk's Office, in coordination with the Budget Office and City Attorney's Office, have been working to review and assess requests and inquiries made by Councilmember Thomson. The City Clerk's Office will be presenting background information, fee methodology, and review the recommended ordinance changes during the July 23, 2019 Council Work Session Meeting. The talking points are also outlined in this memo.

Background

City animal fees and fines for dogs have continued to decline and the number of dogs currently licensed is 9,400. Using the statistics provided in a recent Idaho Statesman article, it is estimated that there are 68,000 dogs in city of Boise, resulting in an estimated license compliance rate of 14%. The City of Boise is a very dog friendly community and is known to have a higher per capita dog ownership than other communities. As such, the city has provided the community with dog friendly amenities and services.

During the FY20 budget workshop, Council approved two Animal Compliance Officer positions to support increasing demands and maintain current service levels. Additionally, Council decided to maintain the current licensing fee structure, rather than approve an increase as recommended by staff.

It is also important to note that the city is involved in stakeholder discussions to obtain a county-wide unified approach for animal services.

Fee Methodology

Historically, the City's methodology for license fees is to align the activity with the associated costs. Animal licensing fees have been used to offset the associated costs of internal and external animal enforcement, IHS contract services, and administrative and legal costs associated with contract administration and licensing. The city also provides amenities and enforcement within its 7,000 acres of park and reserve lands, and 200 miles of trails.

The current animal licensing fees and pick-up fines do not cover the costs of the activities above. Therefore, more general fund revenue is needed to offset the cost of service. People who don't own dogs are typically willing to pay some of the cost of animal control, however the philosophy of the City has been for the activity users (dog owners) to bear a larger portion of the associated costs. The budget office provided a high-level analysis of the increased costs for FY20.

- City has increased the IHS budget by \$296,000, an increase of 31% to \$1.2 million, to support the new operational model.
- City is adding two term-limited Animal Compliance Officers at an approximate cost of \$110,000.
- City expects to receive an additional IHS funding request, estimated at \$250,000 or more, due to other municipalities opting out of the IHS contract.

If the City were to reduce license fee revenues as presented, the fiscal impact is estimated at an additional \$75,000. The table below shows the total estimated fiscal impact of \$731,000 for FY20.

Increased Animal Control and Licensing Costs for FY 2020

Increase to IHS contract	\$ 296,000
Two more animal control officers	\$ 110,000
Base cost change	\$ 406,000
 Further IHS contract increase	 \$ 250,000
Revised base cost change	\$ 656,000
 If animal license fee revenue reduced	 \$ 75,000
Revised base cost change	\$ 731,000



Ordinance Amendments

Councilmember Thomson has proposed amendments to the City's Animal Code. Each proposed item has been bulleted below and are more specifically addressed in a memo from the City Attorney's Office. At the July 23, 2019 Council Work Session, staff will review the recommended changes in a mark-up session and seek Council's direction prior to moving forward.

Specific Code Recommendations for Mark-Up Discussion:

- Non-Commercial Kennel License
- Animal Cruelty
- Service Dog and Service Dog-in-Training Provisions and Exemptions
- Animals in Vehicles - Good Samaritan Immunity
- Prohibited Animals – Displaying Animals
- Dog Licensing Provisions
- Sale of Bred Dogs by Third-Parties
- Transfer of Animals on Public Property

Other Issues and Considerations

Based on community stakeholder discussions and Councilmember Thomson's inquiry, staff feels there are additional opportunities to gain licensing compliance and enhance customer service. These recommendations are outlined below, and staff is recommending further evaluation of each item. Staff also recommends reaching out to other jurisdictions to identify best practices to achieve the City's goals.

Citation Adjudication

A citation for failure to license a dog in Idaho requires a formal court process. This requires additional city and county resources to manage, including staff being required to appear in court and legal support to prosecute. Additionally, limited proceeds are generated for the city.

This process also diminishes the citizen experience and doesn't align with the City's values, as dog owners are required to adjudicate through the Ada County court system and pay addition court costs.

Pursuing an administrative rule change through the state legislature could allow cities to collect these fines, similar to the authority granted to cities for the collection of parking fines. Additionally, staff feels that would enhance the citizen experience and allow the city to recover some of the cost of enforcement services.

Spayed/Neuter Licensing Fees

A majority of the cities within Ada County have a spayed and neuter licensing incentive above 150%, including the City of Boise. Removing or reducing this cost differential could result in fewer people getting dogs spayed/neutered.



Veterinarian Partnerships to Obtain Compliance

The City could mandate license compliance through veterinarians, whereby a veterinarian who treats a dog must license the dog prior to discharge.

Technology

Technology could offer a solution, whereby licenses could be issued in the field by Animal Compliance Officers, either upon demand or when a failure to license or other issue is discovered.

Staff Recommendations

- Maintain current animal license fees.
- Consider a one-time amnesty month for people who have not licensed their dogs.
- Do a full cost analysis for animal control services, including other costs like front counter licensing time, management and administrative time, legal support, and indirect costs.
- Allow some time for county-wide discussions to continue with IHS and other local jurisdictions, to see if course changes occur.
- Evaluate and report back on best practices for animal control licensing and funding, including other methods to increase dog licensing compliance.

